

ALLCHINS -Again!

Dave Hill

In the past a few of us have tried to reconstruct the alphabet that Allchin used for their perfin dies. After all we have 2 long, slightly different, lists of their clients c1905 and by comparing with identified dies for that time we should be able to pin-point their alphabet. But we have failed. Or at least we have found too many alphabets, although we are almost sure letters with "cut corners", ie 'OV that look like octagons, could belong to Allchin, the evidence is not conclusive.

Why is this, when Sloper's later alphabet is so obvious?

Let us consider the "big 3" of perfins in the early 1900's. Waterlow and Allchin each only did about 15% of Sloper's output, "the rest" also together did 15%. Waterlow used their "SPG" variable dies for clients who did not want to pay for their own, special die. I am unsure if the alphabet they used for their special dies can be determined. We only have a short, late, list of Waterlow clients at the time they gave the work to Sloper. But the "SPG" alphabet is quite common and easily recognised, for 3 or 2 letter perfins. I think this is because they had few clients but many repeat orders. On the other hand, I think Allchins had many clients but few repeat orders so date of use and postmark evidence is scant. Hence the perfins of many known Allchin clients have not been identified.

Despite Slopers apparent fear of competition, he did about 70% of the total output of perfins, according to a Post Office survey in 1906, amounting to stamps to the value of over £500,000. Many of these stamps would have been the ½d value, a few £1. If we take 1d as an average that is about 130 million stamps per year.

Also consider their business. Slopers did perfins, perfin machines, ticket, cheque and dating machines as well as other prototype engineering. They also, later, printed overprints for receipt stamps. Waterlows were security printers of stamps, banknotes and cheques, but not necessarily engineers. Such well-known names as Perkins Bacon and Harrisons came unstuck when they first got stamp printing contracts! Allchins had a sub post office in a chemists (it still exists) and were the

biggest producers of stamp coils before they were printed continuously on the web (and after, not all stamps were always printed on the web). Simple machinery was available to do this so I think their workforce would have been mainly unskilled and female. (Note did Allchins produce coils for Sloper to perfin for the clients who had affixing machines that did not perfin stamps?)

Where I have succeeded in identifying at least one Allchin alphabet, I think it was by concentrating on clients whose titles ended "& Co.Ld." (they invariably abbreviated this to just Co.Ld.) Reasoning that repetition of this would have encouraged the person making the die to copy. In all I found 17 users with very similar perfin endings, 4 of which I put forward as possible new identities.

These lower letters were often differently spaced or irregular, the upright of 'L' of 'Ld' often leans one way or the other. The stops were also sometimes missing. Of the upper letters of all the above perfins, a few were well formed if sometimes irregular, the errors may have come about in marking out or drilling. But often they had the characteristic cut corners, but never the bottom letters. Also the upper letters of different perfins sometimes coincided, rather uncannily, as though a common grid (but not necessarily a straight grid) had been used. Or the letters aligned just one grid across. Sometimes the letters are seriffed and look very different but are not.

Known or Suspected '/Co.Ld' Dies

A2540.01	AG/Co.Ld	Alfred Goslett & Co Ltd, Lon. WC] these two very
A3590.01	AL/Co.Ld.	Alfred Leney & Co Ltd, Dover] similar
B7470.01	B.V/Co.Ld.	Bolckow, Vaughan & Co Ltd, Middlesborough
C5950.01	CP/Co.Ld.	Consolidated Petroleum Co Ltd, Lon. EC -seriffed "P"
F0370.01	F.B/Co.Ld.	Faire Bros. & Co Ltd, Leicester
F4407.01	F.W/Co.Ld.	Furness Withy & Co Ltd, West Hartlepool
H3300.01	H.H/Co.Ld.	Hick, Hargreaves & Co Ltd, Bolton
H6160.01	H.R/Co.Ld.	Henry Rossel & Co Ltd, Sheffield
P0630.01a	P.B/Co.Ld.	Pyman Bell & Co Ltd, Newcastle-seriffed "F" & "B"
V0380.01	V/Co.Ld.	Vinolia Co Ltd, London NW
W3110.01	WG/Co.Ld.	William Gray & Co Ltd, Hartlepool
Y0225.01	Y/Co.Ld.	Yarrow & Co Ltd, Poplar E, Lon. - seriffed "Y"

Have you the following perfin with these postmarks dated c1905 so we can assume suspected identities?

C1305.01	CC/Co.Ld.	? Copestake Crampton & Co Ltd, Bow Churchyard, EC [See earlier article on Copestake Crampton perfin, "Cs with "cut corners", name added on 2nd Allchin list in typescript]
C7029.01	CSE/Co. Ld.	? Clydesdale Shipbuilding & Engineering Co Ltd, Port Glasgow
D5095.01	D.V/Co.Ld	? Davenport Vernon & Co Ltd, High Wycombe
J2515.O1	JE/Co.Ld.	? Jesse Ellis & Co Ltd, Maidstone

To be continued, but in conclusion to this first part I do not think one die was altered to make another. There are not enough examples of slightly different perfin to make me think that, as there is with Waterlow 'SPG' dies.

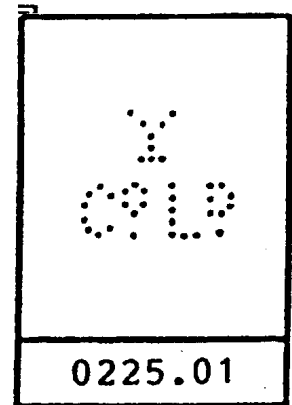
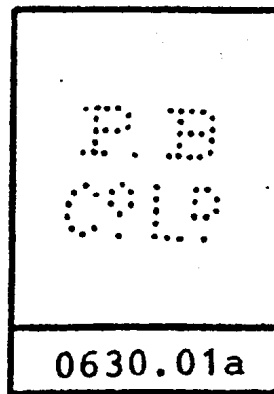
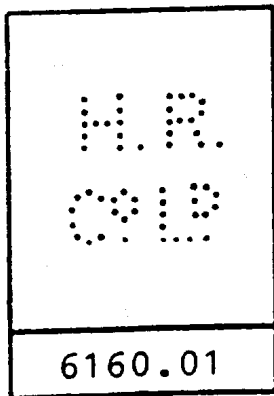
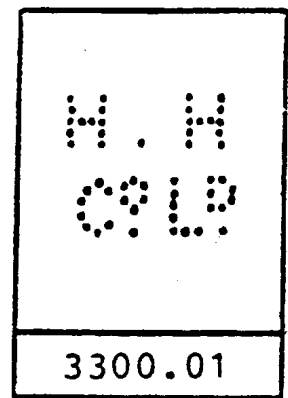
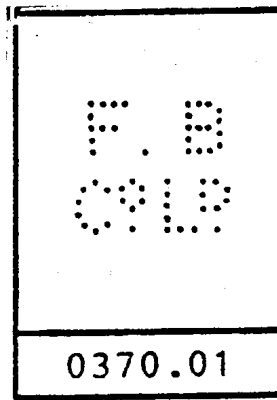
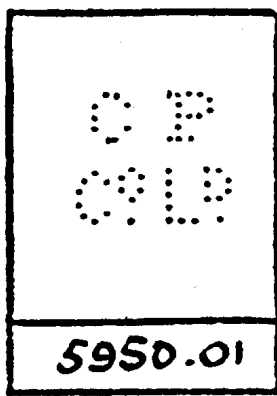
POSTSCRIPT

I maintained in the first part of this article that Allchin dies were not altered to make another die.

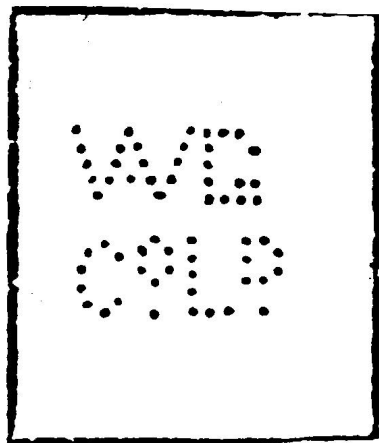
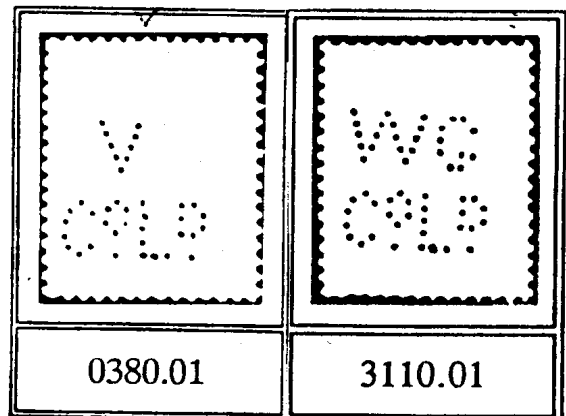
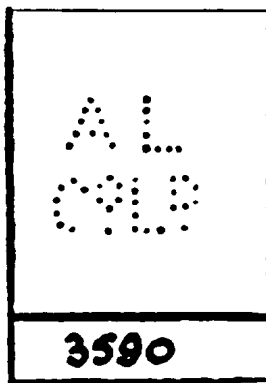
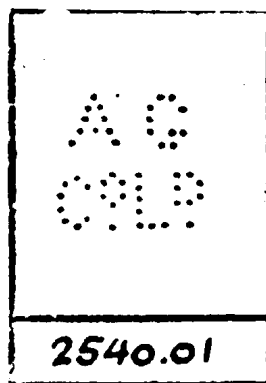
There is only one exception where Roy has allocated variable status to an Allchin die, that is for the dies of Kelly's Directories Ltd.

Although coming close are the 4 dies, J5293.01, a, b & c, all of which I think belong to Allchin client J Mailing & Co of Newcastle and Wolverhampton and the 4 (or more) dies J8600.03, a, b & c which I think belong to Allchin client Josiah Wedgwood & Sons of Stoke on Trent, although this is not listed in Tomkins. These last dies have badly formed "S's" which it shares with other perfin which could also be for Allchin clients.

Both the above groups of perfin have a "J" with cut corners to the lower loop. This is also shared with 2 other perfin but of a larger alphabet. J0660.03b is known used by Allchin client, Jones Bros & Co of Wolverhampton. I think the same die, but with the 'o' of 'Co' removed, J0580.01, belongs to Allchin client Jackson Bros & Cory, London EC. Has anyone got this last perfin with EC postmarks, dated c1905? If so, Roy may accept for another suspected identity.

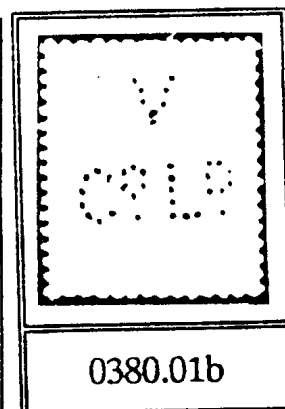
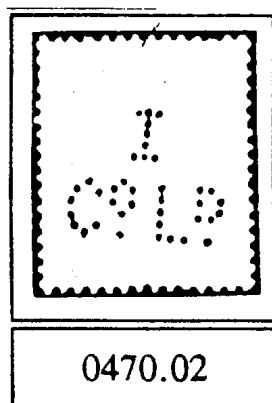
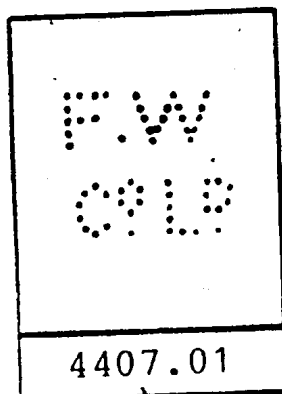
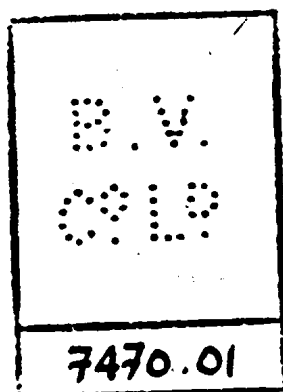


Smaller alphabet families

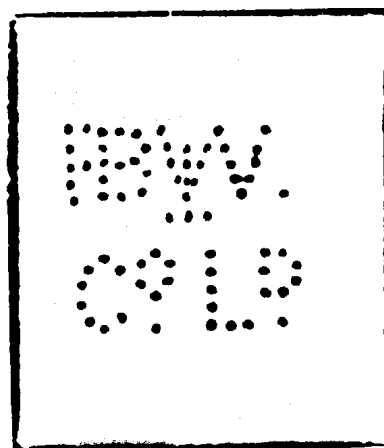


These could have been made from one pattern as illustrated on the enlarged photocopy alongside

The following perfin use a slightly wider spaced "Co.Ld."



These could all have
been made from the pattern
illustrated alongside.



If you have these dies dated cl905
please let me know

